

# **“WHAT WORKS” IN REDUCING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE: A META-REVIEW AND FIELD STUDY**

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**Thank you:**

Wilson Center  
USAID

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Reviewers, commenters, interviewees

# Evidence-informed policy

Evidence-informed policy is policy informed by the best evidence and data available

- Opportunities

- Improvements in accuracy, objectivity, consistency, transparency

- Risks

- May not be reliable, i.e. internal validity
- May not be generalizable, i.e. external validity
- Has programmatic bias, doesn't speak to systems

# About this report

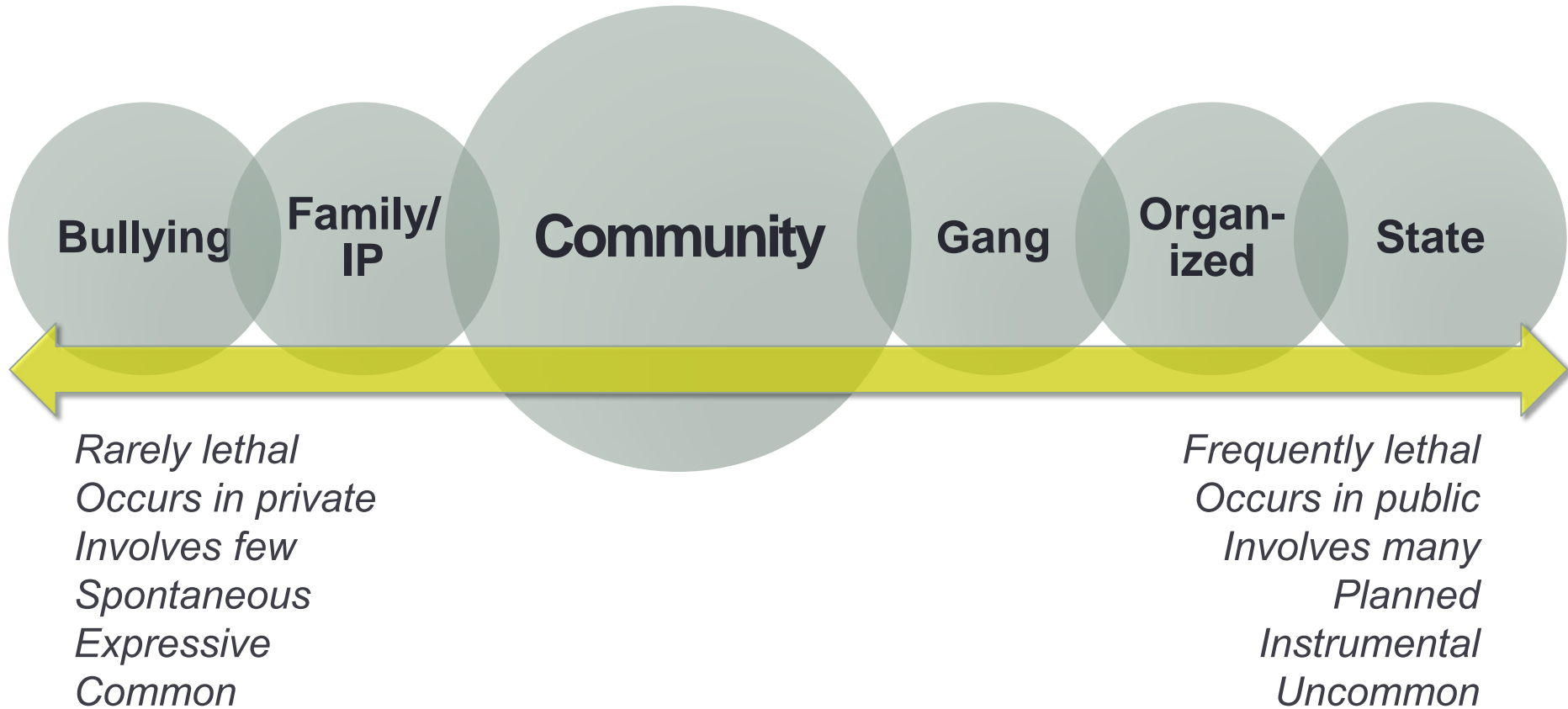
“To date, no meta-reviews have included the full range of programs that are intended to prevent youth violence; additionally, no meta-reviews have used both quantitative and qualitative approaches.”

Matjasko et al., 2012

# Violence defined

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or group that results in physical injury or death.

# Violence described



# Systematic meta-review

Campbell Systematic Reviews  
2012:6  
First published: 02 April 2012  
Last updated: March 2012  
Search executed: September 2010

## The Effects of "Pulling Levers" Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime

Anthony A. Braga and David L. Weisburd

Health & Place 26 (2014) 78–87



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Health & Place

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/healthplace](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/healthplace)

Review Essay

Systematic review of the effects of poverty deconcentration  
and urban upgrading on youth violence

Ali Cassidy<sup>a,\*</sup>, Gabrielle Inglis<sup>b</sup>, Charles Wiysonge<sup>c</sup>, Richard Matzopoulos<sup>a,d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Cape Town, South Africa  
<sup>b</sup>University of the Western Cape, South Africa  
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<sup>d</sup>University of the Western Cape, South Africa

JUSTICE QUARTERLY, 2014  
Vol. 31, No. 4, 633–663, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2012.673632>

## The Effects of Hot Spots Policing on Crime: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Anthony A. Braga, Andrew V. Papachristos and  
David M. Hureau

In recent  
years, there  
has been  
research  
on "hot  
spots" of  
crime. This  
research  
can be  
used to  
develop  
more  
effective  
policing  
strategies.

## Firearms Laws and the Reduction of Violence: A Systematic Review

Robert A. Hahn, PhD, MPH, Oleg Bilukha, MD, PhD, Alex Crosby, MD, MPH, Mindy T. F. Akiva Liberman, PhD, Eve Moscicki, ScD, MPH, Susan Snyder, PhD, Farris Tuma, ScD, PhD, Pei Tang, PhD, and the Task Force on Community Preventive Services

Systematic Review

## What Works in Youth Violence Prevention: A Review of the Literature

Abigail

Abstract  
Objective  
Methods  
Results  
Conclusions  
and establish

Keywords  
adolescent

Introduction

Although  
violence  
rates, the  
approximate  
crimes in  
national

## Effective correctional treatment and violent reoffending: A meta-analysis

Craig Dowden<sup>(1)</sup>  
and

D.A. Andrews  
Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario

On trouve dans beaucoup de méta-analyses des données qui confirment  
l'avantage d'utiliser les principes du travail social, du risque, des besoins  
et de la réceptivité. Toutefois, malgré cette acceptation si répandue

Research on Social Work Practice  
22(2) 141-156  
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SAGE

Campbell Systematic Reviews  
2007:6  
First published: 9 August, 2007  
Last updated: 9 August, 2007

## Effects of Cognitive- Behavioral Programs for Criminal Offenders

Mark W. Lipsey, Nana A. Landenberger, Sandra

Overview

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services (the Task Force) is conducting systematic reviews of scientific evidence about diverse interventions for the prevention of violence, and resulting injury and death, including, among others, early childhood home visitation,<sup>1,2</sup> therapeutic foster care,<sup>3</sup> the transfer of juveniles to the adult justice system, school programs for the teaching of prosocial behavior, and community policing. This report presents findings about the effectiveness of firearms laws in preventing violence. Studies of the following firearms laws were included in the review: bans on specified firearms or ammunition; restrictions on firearms acquisition; waiting periods for firearms acquisition; firearms registration; licensing of firearms owners; "shall issue" carry laws that allow people who pass background checks to carry concealed weapons; child access prevention laws; zero tolerance laws for firearms in schools; and combinations of firearms laws.

The Task Force found the evidence available from identified studies was insufficient to determine the effectiveness of any of the firearms laws reviewed singly or in combination. A finding that evidence is insufficient to determine effectiveness means that we do not yet know what effect, if any, the law has on an outcome—not that the law has no effect on the outcome. This report describes how the reviews were conducted, gives detailed information about the Task Force's findings, and provides information about research gaps and priority areas for future research.

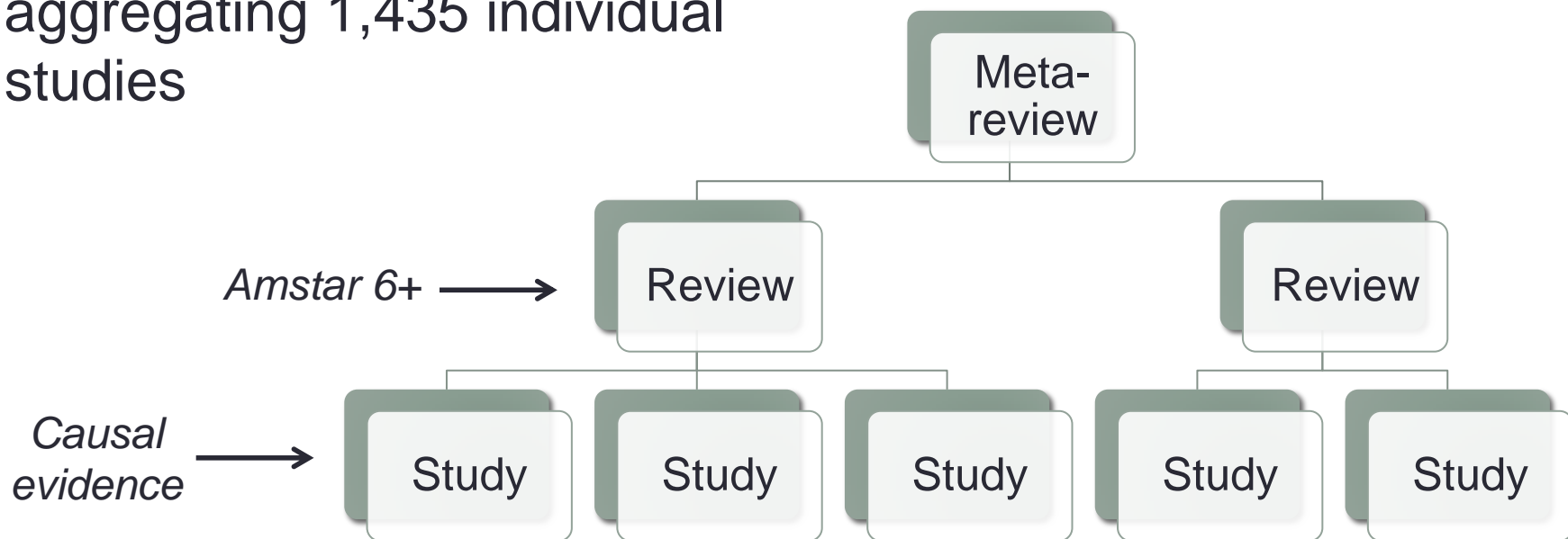
From the Epidemiology Program Office (Hahn, Bilukha, Snyder, Bries) and National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Crosby), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia; Department of Psychiatry and Public Health, Columbia University (Fulilove), New York, New York; National Institute of Justice (Liberman), Washington, DC; National Institute of Mental Health (Moscicki, Tuma), Bethesda, Maryland.  
\*Address correspondence and reprint requests to: Robert A. Hahn, ...

Introduction

Although rates of firearms-related violence in the United States have declined since the second leading cause of injury in the most recent year for which available.<sup>4</sup> Of 29,573 firearm-related deaths in 2001—an average of 81 per day—suicide, 11,671 (39.5%) were homicide, 2,311 (7.5%) were unintentional; and 231 (0.8%) were committed in other circumstances. In 1998, for each 2.1 nonfatal firearm-related injuries in emergency departments.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that all violent crimes—murder, aggravated assault, robbery, and rape—committed in 1998 were committed with a firearm. In the United States, 1996 GNP  $\approx$  US\$10 billion, which data are available (Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> Approximately 4.5 million non-owned firearms are sold each year in the United States, including 2 million handguns. Estimates of annual secondhand handgun sales range from 2 to 4.5 million.<sup>7,10</sup> That approximately 0.5 million handguns are sold annually.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the estimated value of handgun transactions ranges from 7 to 20 billion dollars annually, which is between 47% and 64% of the total value of the handgun market.<sup>10</sup> New firearms can be sold to licensed purchasers (FFLs); FFLs are required to investigate whether a purchaser is prohibited from purchasing a firearm if a felony was committed or if the purchaser is a convicted felon. FFLs are not sold to convicted felons.

# Meta-review methodology

- Searched leading databases, journals, grey literature in Americas, Caribbean and Europe
- Focused on community violence and rigorous evidence
- Identified 43 eligible reviews aggregating 1,435 individual studies

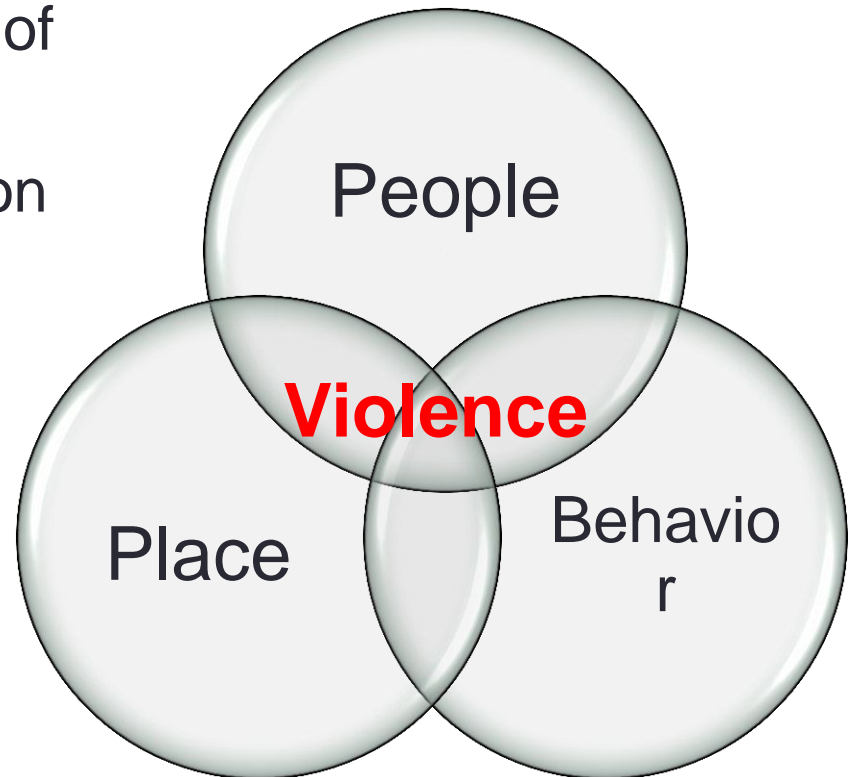




# Meta-review highlights

Violence is “sticky,” i.e. highly concentrated among small number of *places*, *people*, and *behaviors*

- In Boston, 70% of shootings in 5% of city
- In 5 Latin American cities, 50% of homicides in 1.6% of blocks
- In most cities, 0.5% of population causes 75% of homicides
- Guns, gangs, alcohol all strongly associated with violence



# Meta-review highlights

## Place-based strategies

- Hot spots and broken windows policing moderately effective, community policing not effective
  - Targeting, problem-solving, legitimacy important
- CPTED, urban renewal strategies only modestly effective

## People-based strategies

- ***Focused deterrence, cognitive behavioral therapy very effective*** ✓
- Family-based strategies moderately effective
- School-based strategies, vocational training effectiveness unclear
- RNR rehabilitation effective, “control” strategies for juveniles not

## Behavior-based strategies

- Firearms enforcement moderately effective, guns buybacks not
- Drug treatment effective, drug enforcement not
- Targeted gang enforcement effective, gang prevention not

# Field study



# Field study methodology

Conducted fieldwork in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, U.S.

- 51 semi-structured interviews
- 22 individual site visits
- additional field observations and supporting document review

# Field study highlights

In the U.S., met with leadership, management, and staff from leading evidence-informed interventions

- Hot spots policing
- Focused deterrence
- Streetwork
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Family-based services (GRYD YSET)

Common themes:

- “Go where the violence is”
- “Meet them where they’re at”
- No “business as usual”
- “Stay true to the model”
- “Use the data”
- “You win with people”



# Field study highlights

In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, met with broad range of subjects

- Government officials
- Local law enforcement
- Community leaders
- Faith-based leaders
- Service providers
- USAID, INL officials

While passion and commitment was impressive, anti-violence efforts are hampered by 3 basic “incapacities”

1. Inability of state to administer fundamental justice-related tasks, i.e. impunity
2. Lack of effective collaboration, coordination
3. Absence of useful data and statistics

# Report conclusions



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## WHAT WORKS IN REDUCING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE: A META-REVIEW AND FIELD STUDY FOR THE NORTHERN TRIANGLE

# Elements of effectiveness

## #1 Specificity





# Elements of effectiveness

## #2 Proactivity



# Elements of effectiveness

## #3 Legitimacy





# Elements of effectiveness

## #4 Capacity

**IZARRON INFORMATIVO EQUIPO RESIDENCIAL LIBERTAD**

**META DEL MES**

ACTIVIDADES	10-25	27-31 Agosto	3-8 Agosto	10-15 Agosto	S4
Clinicas Deportivas	239 / 380	254 / 380	Vacación	219 / 360	
Ligas Deportivas	178 / 285	194 / 325	vacación	204 / 285	
Clinica Karate	26 / 75	20 / 75	vacación	32 / 60	
Clinica Tenis de Mesa	0 / 50	9 / 50		8 / 18	
Clinica Dibujo	11 / 46	7 / 46		11 / 38	
Clinica Ajedrez	13 / 10	5 / 10		8 / 14	

**COMENTARIOS**

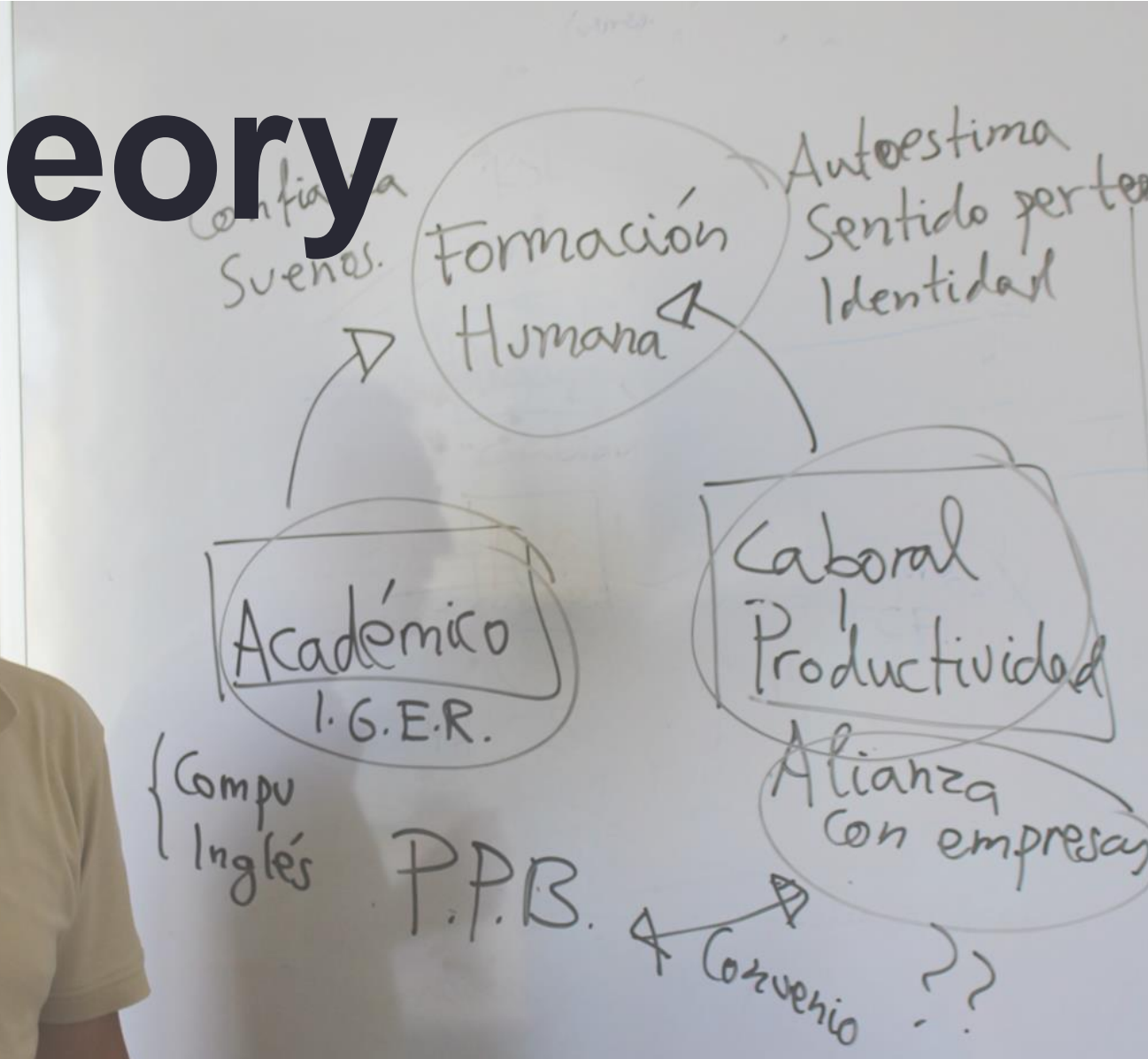
- Como responder a los bromos
- Como evitar problemas con mis compañeros
- Como buscar problemas
- Importancia de pertenecer a Grupos
- Problemas en Transporte
- Importancia de tener un grupo de amigos

**RESIDENCIAL LIBERTAD 11 AÑOS (Tránsito)**

**CONSTRUYENDO COMUNITARIAMENTE**

# Elements of effectiveness

## #5 Theory



## Elements of effectiveness

# #6 Partnership



# Focused deterrence, cognitive behavioral therapy, and the elements

	Specific.	Proact.	Legit.	Capac.	Theory	Partners.
FD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CBT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-



# Concentration Principle

- Most strategies – two-thirds of total examined – associated with modest or moderate effects
- Even most effective strategies not capable of reversing highest rates of community violence alone
- Given this, success may lie in accumulation of individually modest but collectively robust programmatic effects

# Concentration Principle

- Interventions focusing on highest risk places, people, and behaviors generate strongest effects
  - True for policing (Braga, 2015), gang reduction (Gravel et al., 2012), youth violence prevention (Matjasko et al., 2012); adult and juvenile recidivism reduction (Hollin, 1999; Lipsey and Cullen, 2007)
  - Limbos et al. (2007) examined 15 randomized controlled trials of anti-violence interventions - 2 of 6 (33%) primary, 3 of 7 (43%) secondary, 2 of 2 (100%) tertiary prevention interventions effective in reducing violent behavior



# Concentration Principle

- Community violence displacement is generally minimal, impact to surrounding areas more likely to be positive
  - “[O]ver 30 years of research evidence on this topic... suggests that crime relocates in only a minority of instances” (Johnson et al., 2014)
  - Note: organized crime more capable of relocating
- Coordination corollary: concentrated programmatic effects must be aligned and coordinated with one another
  - The “comprehensive” conundrum

# Implementation Imperative

- Sound implementation essential to intervention effectiveness
- Determining appropriate program dosage or intensity is critical
- In the Northern Triangle, adaptation of interventions developed in different (usually U.S.) settings crucial

# Evaluation Imperative

- Recent study indicates 7% of security-related programs in Latin America feature strong evaluation component with positive findings; 57% feature no evaluation whatsoever
- Absolutely essential to improve both quantity and quality of evidence and data
- Cumulative knowledge-building critical moving forward

# Report recommendations

Governmental and nongovernmental funders, typically free from day-to-day operational responsibilities, have opportunity and responsibility to think and plan for the long term.

# Report recommendations

R1: Recognize centrality of violence reduction to further development to the region and plan accordingly.

R2: Transition to evidence-informed approaches incrementally but purposefully and in consultation with local stakeholder.

R3: Build internal and external capacity for evidence-informed violence reduction.

R4: Invest in evidence and data, with an emphasis on the cumulative development of knowledge.

# Conclusion

“The efficiency of crime prevention can be greatest when resources are concentrated on the power few units... Further support for this principle (and its key assumption) can come from a systematic review of all possible evidence.”

Sherman, 2012